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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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THE KASHMIR PROBLEM

The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan has defied six separate UN attempts at solution. It has now become a chronic problem with no end in sight. Despite occasional alarms, it is unlikely to result in war or a serious crisis in diplomatic relations in the near future.

In 1948, India and Pakistan agreed to settle the future allegiance of Kashmir by means of a plebiscite. Since the cease-fire on 1 January 1949, UN efforts have concentrated on creating favorable conditions for holding this plebiscite. The greatest difficulty has been in determining the number and kind of military forces to remain in Kashmir prior to, and during, the plebiscite. There are now about 60,000 Indian and 20,000 Pakistani troops in Kashmir on either side of the cease-fire line.

To date all negotiations have broken down. Pakistan has consistently displayed amenability to the suggestions of mediators. India, however, has adamantly insisted that Pakistan has no legal rights in Kashmir, and the Indian Government will not agree to any troop ratio not overwhelmingly in its favor.

The Indian position is based on Nehru's emotionalism regarding Kashmir, his ancestral home, on the belief that to make concessions would be to display weakness, and on the fear that the Moslem majority in Kashmir would vote for accession to Pakistan in a free plebiscite. Unless Pakistan surrenders to India's demands, the Security Council probably cannot effect a settlement.

Meanwhile, the Indian and Pakistani people have lost much of their interest in the issue. Both governments are beset by serious internal political and economic problems, and neither is likely to jeopardize its future by forcing a war in Kashmir. A continued stalemate now seems to be the most likely prospect. Partition of the state along the existing cease-fire line is possible but less likely.

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Rotation of troops by both sides may occasionally cause a war scare, and disputes such as that over canal waters in the Indus River basin will at times lead to heightened tension. Accordingly, the Kashmir issue will continue to cause difficulties in American relations with India and Pakistan.

Both Kashmiri and Indian Communists have taken advantage of unsettled conditions in Kashmir. Communists have infiltrated the government of Indian-held Kashmir and have supported its efforts to obtain a greater degree of autonomy. Indian Communists have joined Hindu nationalist elements in demanding withdrawal of the Kashmir case from the United Nations. Pakistani Communists have in the past played an unimportant part in the struggle. On balance, the Communists of South Asia almost certainly will be unable significantly to exploit the situation in the long run.

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